

Last week Congressman Blumenauer met with local farmers as well as representatives from farming distribution networks, farmers markets, conservation groups, communities of faith, and other interested parties to discuss the 2011 reauthorization of the Farm Bill. The Farm Bill is an omnibus piece of legislation that Congress passes approximately every five years to authorize, amend, and fund programs related to American agriculture.

Congressman Blumenauer believes that Oregon is dramatically shortchanged by the current composition of the Farm Bill, particularly because we tend to have smaller scale operations and our farmers and ranchers largely produce food rather than heavily subsidized commodities. Here in the United States, the benefits directed to cotton, corn, and sugar are concentrated in the top percentages of farming interests and flow largely to a handful of states. The environmental titles which would benefit Oregon agricultural interests as well as the environment and the rest of the population are profoundly lacking.

Congressman Blumenauer believes the next Farm Bill should maximize value to the taxpayer, the environment, and especially our Oregon farmers and ranchers. This meeting was the start of a conversation to learn specifically what policy refinements in the Farm Bill will make the most difference for Oregonians.